

# Development of behaviour-based measurement tool with defined intervention level for assessing acute pain in cats

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#### 3 ABSTRACT

- 4 OBJECTIVES: To develop a Composite Measure Pain Scale Feline (CMPS-F) tool to assess acute
- 5 pain in cats and derive an intervention score.
- 6 METHODS: To develop the prototype CMPS-F, words describing painful cats were collected, grouped
- 7 into behavioural categories and ranked. To assess prototype validity two observers independently
- 8 assigned CMPS-F and numerical rating scale (NRS) scores to 25 hospitalised cats before and after
- 9 analgesic treatment. Following interim analysis the prototype was revised (rCMPS-F). To determine
- 10 intervention score two observers independently assigned rCMPS-F and NRS scores to 116 cats. A
- 11 further observer, a veterinarian, stated whether analgesia was necessary. Statistical tests included
- 12 Wilcoxon, Mann-Whitney, 95% confidence intervals (CI), general linear model ANOVA and linear
- 13 discriminant analysis (p < 0.05).
- 14 RESULTS: Mean ± SD decrease in rCMPS-F and NRS scores following analgesia were 2.4 ± 2.87
- and 1.9 ± 2.34, respectively (95% CI for mean change in rCMPS-F between 1.21 and 3.6). Changes
- in rCMPS-F and NRS were significantly correlated (r = 0.8) (p<0001). Intervention level score of  $\geq$
- 17 4/16 was derived for rCMPS-F (26.7% misclassification) and ≥ 3/10 for NRS (14.5% misclassification).
- 18 CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE: A valid instrument with a recommended analgesic intervention level has
- 19 been developed to assess acute clinical pain in cats.
- 20

23

- 21 Keywords
- 22 Pain, Validation, Reliability, Pain Assessment Tools, Cats

Comment [GC5]:

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## 25 INTRODUCTION

26

27	The cornerstone of effective pain management is the availability of valid, reliable and responsive pain
28	assessment tools. Validity (content, criterion and construct) provides evidence that the instrument is
29	able to measure that which it was designed to measure and responsiveness demonstrates that the
30	instrument is sensitive enough to detect differences in health status that are clinically important. In
31	clinical veterinary practice, the usefulness of a pain assessment instrument is markedly enhanced if
32	the score can be linked to an intervention level which is informative as to whether or not an animal
33	requires analgesic treatment (Reid et al., 2007). Additionally, an instrument should have utility. Even
34	if an instrument is valid and reliable, it may not be useful if it requires lengthy training, is time-
35	consuming to administer, or if scoring is complex (Streiner 1993).

36

Few pain scales have been developed for the cat. These include the Colorado State University Feline 37 38 Acute Pain Scale<sup>1</sup> and the French Association for Animal Anaesthesia and Analgesia pain scoring system, 4A-Vet<sup>2</sup> for dogs and cats, neither of which can claim to be both valid and reliable. More 39 40 recently a multidimensional composite pain scale for assessing acute postoperative pain in cats was developed by Brondani and colleagues (2011) and subsequently translated into English (Bondani et 41 al. 2013). Although criteria for utility are unlikely to be met, both language versions have been shown 42 43 to be valid, reliable and responsive and an intervention level derived when used in cats undergoing ovariohysterectomy. 44

45

The psychometric approach to scale design, well established in human medicine for the measurement of complex and intangible constructs such as pain and quality of life, encompasses an established process of item selection, questionnaire construction and testing for validity, reliability and responsiveness. The Glasgow Composite Measure Pain Scale for the assessment of acute pain in the dog (CMPS) was the first tool in veterinary medicine designed using psychometric principles, (Holton et al. 2001). Subsequently a short form (CMPS-SF) was derived for routine clinical use where the emphasis was on ease of use and speed of completion (Reid et al. 2007) and an intervention level

<sup>a</sup>http://csuanimalcancercenter.org/assets/files/csu acute pain scale feline.pdf

Comment [GC7]:

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> ivapm.evetsites.net/refld,20467/refDownload.pml

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.medvet.umontreal.ca/4avet/

53	was determined to aid clinical decision making. The aim of this study was to develop a similar scale	
54	for the cat to assess acute pain, arising from a broad range of clinical conditions, and to derive an	
55	intervention level score.	
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59	MATERIALS AND METHODS	
60	Following development of the prototype CMPS-F (see below) two studies were carried out	]:
61	simultaneously in two locations. Study 1 - Validity Testing, proved evidence of construct validity and	
62	Study 2 - Derivation of an Analgesic Intervention Level, identified an analgesic intervention level for	
63	both the CMPS-F and Numerical Rating Scale (NRS), with concurrent criterion validity also	]:
64	determined. Analysis of study 1 and user feedback led to revision of the scale (rCMPS-F). In the Comment [GC1	0]:
65	revision process, statements were combined and no information was lost, making possible the	
66	derivation of rCMPS-F scores from CMPS-F scores in studies 1 and 2, allowing analysis of pooled	
67	data in study 2.	
68		
69	Development of a prototype scale (CMPS-F)	
70	A psychometric approach was adopted to ensure content validity as described previously in dogs Comment [GC1	1]:
71	(Holton et al. 2001; Morton et al. 2005). Words describing cats in acute pain were collected from 30	
72	individuals (13 veterinary surgeons, 10 veterinary nurses, 2 breeders, 2 rescue workers and 3	
73	owners), each of whom completed a questionnaire consisting of 2 parts. First they were asked to list	
74	all the words they would use to describe a cat in acute pain in the following categories; posture,	
75	comfort, vocalisation, attention to any painful area, demeanour/response to people, mobility and	
76	response to touch. The second part of the questionnaire listed the descriptive words in each category	
77	that appeared in the dog acute pain instrument and respondents were asked to indicate whether or	
78	not these words applied to the cat.	
79	One hundred and fifteen words were considered for inclusion in the prototype cat acute pain tool.	
80	Subsequent consideration by an expert group of veterinary pain specialists reduced that number to	
81	40, which were then grouped into 6 behavioural categories - vocalisation, activity/posture, attention to	
82	wound, response to people, response to touch and demeanour (Appendix 1). The categories were	

83	placed in this sequence in order to follow a defined protocol for interaction with the cat. Finally, the	
84	words within each category were ranked in order of increasing pain intensity using a technique of	
85	paired comparisons. Six hundred and thirty English speaking veterinary surgeons from 23 countries	
86	responded to an online survey in which they were presented with all possible combinations of word	
87	pairs and asked which one of each pair represented the most pain. These results informed the	
88	ordering of items within each category and provided a scoring mechanism based on ranks.	
89	To fulfil completion of the questionnaire observers were asked to choose the word in each category	
90	that best described the observed cat and the final score was the sum of these scores from all	
91	categories.	Comment [gc12]:
92		Comment [gc12].
93	Revision of the CMPS-F	
94	Analysis of the CMPS-F data from 25 cats (Study 1) indicated questions 1 and 3 were contributing	
95	little to the total score (see results section below). These findings suggested that these questions were	
96	not sensitive indicators of pain, or alternatively that these behaviours did not occur commonly.	
90 97	Furthermore, user feedback indicated difficulties with interpretation in these categories. A revised	
98		
	version, rCMPS-F (Appendix 2), was created as follows. Question 1 was reduced from four	
99	descriptors to two composite descriptors, while retaining all the words; 'silent, purring, meowing' and	
100	'crying, growling, groaning' combined into another, so that relevant information was not lost. Question	
101	3 was reduced to two descriptors; 'ignoring any wound or painful area' and 'attention to wound'. The	
102	remainder of the CMPS-F was not altered. The consequence of these changes resulted in the total	
103	score of 22 being reduced to 16.	Comment [GC13]:
104		
105	Study 1 - Validity testing	
106	Construct validity was determined by testing the hypothesis that appropriate analgesic treatment	
107	would produce an improvement in pain state and reduce pain scores. Concurrent criterion validity was	
108	assessed by comparing the test scores with scores derived simultaneously from a NRS	Comment [GC14]:
109		
110	Cats (n=25) hospitalised for surgery, traumatic or medical conditions within either of two participating	
111	centres and deemed by the attending veterinary surgeon to be requiring analgesic treatment were	
	<sup>a</sup> http://csuanimalcancercenter.org/assets/files/csu_acute_pain_scale_feline.pdf	

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112	recruited to the study. No restrictions in patient status, age or breed were made. All cats were scored	
113	for sedation using a simple descriptive scale (SDS) modified from Lascelles and colleagues (1994)	Comment [GC15]:
114	and those with a sedation score of 2 or 3 excluded (n=0) to ensure that residual anaesthetic drugs did	
115	not interfere with the assessment procedure.	
116		
117	A veterinary nurse scored pain using the CMPS-F while a second veterinary surgeon observed the	
118	cat's response. Blinded to the CMPS-F score, this veterinary surgeon allocated a pain score for the	
119	cat using an 11-point NRS; 0 representing no pain and 10 representing worst possible pain. An	
120	analgesic (methadone [Comfortan; Dechra], morphine [Morphine Sulphate; Wockhardt] or	
121	buprenorphine [Vetergesic; Alstoe Animal Health) was then administered in accordance with the	
122	practice / hospital protocol irrespective of the pain score allocated so cats with pain scores of zero	
123	still received analgesia as per the attending clinician instructions. Within 2 hours the same nurse and	
124	veterinary surgeon repeated the scoring procedure. At that time the veterinary surgeon also recorded	
125	a clinical judgement as to whether or not the cat's change in pain was clinically relevant (n=16).	
126	Following feedback from users and discussions with an expert panel this question was subsequently	
127	replaced with a simple descriptive scale (SDS) to evaluate clinical change and veterinary surgeons	
128	were asked if the cat's pain status was much improved, improved, unchanged, worse or much worse	
129	(n=7).	Comment [GC16]:
130		
131	rCMPS-F scores were derived from CMPS-F scores. Statistical analysis included analysis of the	
132	change in pain score (after-before analgesia) using paired analysis, and a general linear model (with	
133	change in pain score after analgesia as response) and pain score before, and other potential	
134	variables as covariates to explore the variability (and hence sensitivity) of the pain scoring system.	
135		
136	Study 2 - Derivation of an analgesic intervention level	
137	Cats (n=116) undergoing post-operative care or having been admitted for any acutely painful trauma	

or medical condition in multiple locations (small animal general practices and university veterinary
schools) were recruited to the study. No restrictions were placed on the breed, age or sex of the cats,

140	or on the type of surgical procedure, trauma or medical condition however all cats were evaluated for		
141	sedation as before and any with a score $>1$ excluded (n=0).		
142			
143	Analgesia was administered according to standard clinical practice by veterinary surgeons carrying	 Comment [G	iC17
144	out treatment orders, routine post-operative examinations, or responding to a nurse's concern that a		
145	cat was in pain. Prior to analgesia administration, a veterinary nurse scored pain in cats (n=57) using		
146	the CMPS-F. Thereafter, blinded to the CMPS-F score, the veterinary surgeon allocated a pain score		
147	using an 11 point NRS as described previously and then responded to the question <i>Do you think this</i>	 Comment [G	C18
148	animal requires analgesia? Yes/No'. A further population of cats (n=59) were scored for pain in an		
149	identical manner using the revised tool (rCMPS-F). Scores from the first 57 cats were converted to		
150	rCMPS-F scores.		
151			
152	Statistical analysis of data from all 116 cats comprised descriptive statistics to show how pain scores		
153	varied for cats considered to require analgesia compared with those that did not. Formal analysis		
154	involved Wilcoxon, Mann-Whitney tests and 95% confidence intervals for medians. Linear		
155	discriminant analysis was used to identify the optimum pain score cut-off to maximise the number of		
156	cats correctly assigned to their clinician-allocated group (in need of analgesia, not in need of		
157	analgesia).	 Comment [G	iC19
158			
159	RESULTS		
160			
161	Revision of the CMPS-F		
162	Analysis of the CMPS-F data from 25 cats (Study 1) indicated questions 1 and 3 were contributing		
163	little to the total score, with 80% of cats being awarded a score of 0 for question 1 (vocalization) and		
164	88% of cats being awarded a score of 0 for question 3 (attention to wound). These findings suggested		
165	that these questions were not sensitive indicators of pain, or alternatively that these behaviours did		
166	not occur commonly. A revised version, rCMPS-F (Appendix 2), was subsequently created. To		
167	evaluate the utility of the rCMPS-F for assessing pain, a further 20 cats were scored. User feedback		

168	and determination of the frequency of use of each descriptor indicated that no further changes were	
169	necessary.	Comment [GC20]:
170		
171	Study 1	
172	Demographic details of all 25 cats are shown in Table 1. The median pre-analgesia CMPS-F and	
173	NRS scores were 8/22 and 6/10 compared to median post-analgesia scores of 3/22 and 3/10	
174	respectively. Following conversion of the scores from CMPS-F to rCMPS-F the median pre-analgesia	
175	score was 8/16 compared to a median post-analgesia score of 3/16. The mean +/- SD changes in	
176	rCMPS-F and NRS scores following analgesia administration were 2.4 +/- 2.87 and 1.9 +/- 2.34	
177	respectively. The rCMPS-F declined on average between 1.21 and 3.6 (95% confidence interval for	
178	mean change (pre-post) following analgesia. There was a statistically significant correlation of 0.8	
179	(p<0.0001) between the changes in rCMPS-F and NRS (Figure 1).	Comment [GC21]:
180		
181	Of the 18 cats, where the change in analgesia status was described as clinically relevant or not the	
182	question was answered in 16. Of these, in 12 (75%) the change was deemed clinically relevant with a	
183	mean +/- SD decrease in score of 4.17 +/- 3.49 and in the remaining 4 it was not, mean +/- SD	
184	decrease in score of 1.75 +/- 1.71. However the difference between the groups was not clinically	
185	significant ( $p = 0.094$ ). Details of these and the remaining 7 cats are shown in Table 2.	
186		
187	Study 2	
188	Observers comprised veterinary nurses (general, emergency critical care, and specialist disciplines)	
189	and veterinary surgeons with varying levels of expertise (interns, residents and European/American	
190	boarded specialists).	
191		
192	Demographic details and surgical status for the 57 cats scored with the CMPS-F and the 59 cats	
193	scored with the rCMPS-F are shown in Tables 3 and 4 respectively. Cats identified as requiring	
194	analgesia (n=60) had a median pain score of 6 (range, 0 - 15), and for those not requiring analgesia	
195	(n=56), the median score was 2 (range, $0 - 10$ ). For the NRS equivalent values were 4 (range $0 - 10$ )	
196	and 1 (range 0 – 9) respectively. Figures 2a and b show the distribution of NRS and rCMPS-F scores	

respectively for all cats in the study. Based on these results, an intervention level score of 4 or higher was proposed for the rCMPS-F (26.7% misclassification) and 3 or higher for the NRS (14.5% misclassification). Figure 3 shows the relationship between the NRS and rCMPS-F with a correlation value of 0.68 (p<0.01).

201

#### 202 4. DISCUSSION

Following the success of the behaviour based Glasgow CMPS-SF for dogs, now generally accepted as a clinical standard for the measurement of acute pain in that species, a cat tool was constructed using similar psychometric methodology.

206

207 Content validity of the CMPS-F was established by the psychometric methods used during scale
208 construction. Since the scale items were not altered in the revision of the scale, content validity was
209 unchanged in the rCMPS-F.

210

211 The psychometric approach encompasses an established process of item selection, questionnaire 212 construction and testing for validity, reliability and responsiveness. Item selection resulted in a final list of 40 word descriptors grouped into 6 behavioural categories. Many of the items in the CMPS-F 213 and rCMPS-F were similar to those described in the Colorado State University (CSU) Feline Acute 214 pain scale<sup>a</sup> and the UNESP-Botucatu Multidimensional Composite Pain Scale (Brondani et al 2013) 215 216 and the behavioural categories - vocalisation, activity/posture, attention to wound, response to 217 people, response to touch and demeanour - were common to these scales also. Thus the rCMPS-F 218 has good overlap and commonality with other tools in common usage, providing further evidence for 219 its content validity. 220 Other similarities between the scale reported here and the UNESP-Botucatu scale include the ranking 221 of the items within each category according to pain intensity and the provision of a protocol which 222 ensures consistency of the assessment procedure.

223

Concurrent criterion validity establishes the effectiveness of the scale's measurement through
 comparison with a pre-existing gold standard applied simultaneously. However in the absence of a

<sup>a</sup>http://csuanimalcancercenter.org/assets/files/csu\_acute\_pain\_scale\_feline.pdf

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Construct validity can be demonstrated in a variety of ways including the creation of hypotheses regarding the scale items, which are then supported or discredited through experiment. Hypotheses used for testing construct validity of pain scales include 1) the prediction of change in pain scores following the administration of proven analgesics and 2) 'known groups' validity where the instrument

235 should be able to distinguish correctly between groups that would be expected to have different scores. In study 1 the median CMPS-F scores changed from 8/22 pre-analgesia to 3/22 post-236 237 analgesia. It is interesting to note that these values did not change when the scores were converted to 238 rCMPS-F, lending weight to the fact that the revisions to the original CMPS-F were appropriate. There 239 was a mean +/- SD change in rCMPS-F scores of 2.4 +/- 2.87 with 95% confidence interval for mean 240 change (pre-post) following analgesia of 1.2 to 3.6, thus proving the hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 was upheld in study 2 when the tool demonstrated a statistically significant difference in pain scores 241 242 between those cats that required analgesia and those that did not.

243

In general when clinicians reported whether the change pre and post-analgesia (study 1) was clinically significant or not, this was supported by the change in pain scores, providing some evidence for responsiveness of the scale. However due to the small numbers clinical significance was not reached.

248

In study 2, intervention levels of 4/16 and 3/10 were derived for the rCMPS-F and NRS respectively.
To the authors' knowledge an intervention level has not been reported for the NRS and since the
scale remains in use in veterinary practice this represents a useful clinical advancement.

252

Linear discrimination analysis resulted in a misclassification rate of 26.7% for the rCMPS-F which was poorer than that of the NRS (14.5%). The data from this study were interesting as 10 of the cats had

<sup>a</sup>http://csuanimalcancercenter.org/assets/files/csu acute pain scale feline.pdf

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255 relatively high rCMPS-F scores (>9/16), driven largely by high corresponding scores in the 256 demeanour/general impression category; 5 cats had scores of 2 and 5 had scores of 4 for the 257 individual general impression category, yet low NRS scores and were identified as not requiring 258 analgesia. Perhaps, when using the NRS, observers attributed any change in demeanour to 259 temperament rather than pain and accordingly awarded a lower score. Also the veterinary surgeon 260 making the judgement as to whether or not the cat required analgesia did so immediately after using 261 the NRS. Consequently this judgement, intended as a global impression, may have been influenced 262 by the NRS score.

263

264 Brondani et al (2013) used similar methods to determine validity (criterion and construct), responsiveness of the English version of their scale and to define an intervention level. However 265 266 there were marked differences in experimental design compared with the studies described here. All 267 58 cats underwent a strictly standardised soft tissue procedure (ovariohysterectomy) of moderate severity and scoring was performed by observers trained in anaesthesia. Five observers scored 268 269 videotapes and 3 scored in a hospital clinical environment. According to Brondani et al (2013) the Multidimensional Composite Pain Scale (MCPS) is a valid, reliable, responsive scale for assessing 270 271 acute pain in cats undergoing ovariohysterectomy when used by anaesthesiologists and anaesthesia 272 technicians. However it may not perform as well in a wider population of cats suffering a diverse 273 range of painful conditions, both medical and surgical.

274

In contrast, the rCMPS-F was designed to be used in a clinical environment where acute pain would arise from a varied source including post-surgical, trauma and medical cases and where its assessment would be undertaken by observers of varying levels of experience, hence the inclusion of a broad range of cases and observers.

279

User feedback was positive regarding ease of use of the rCMPS-F and the time taken for completion and computation of scores was short, indicating good utility. This is in contrast to the UNESP-Botucatu which in addition to being more time-consuming contains blood pressure measurement which requires the use of specialised equipment and technical expertise and so limits its usefulness.

Comment [GC26]:

284 According to Teasdale and Jennett (1974), for a scale to be generally accepted as universal, it must

285 be practical to use in a wide range of locations and by staff without special training.

286

288

- 287 In summary, the rCMPS-F has been shown to be a valid scale for the measurement of acute pain in
  - cats in general veterinary practice with some evidence for its responsiveness presented. Users
- 289 should consider the administration of analgesia if scores are equal to or >4/16. Further development
- 290 of the scale will include the incorporation of a facial expression component (paper submitted to this
- 291 journal) with the intention of improving sensitivity of the scale.
- 292
- 293

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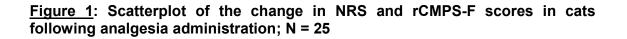
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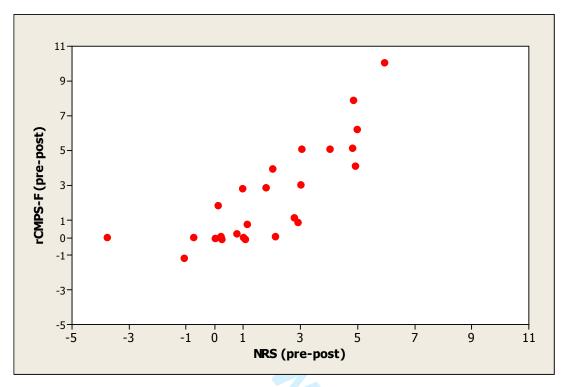
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332	
333	Lancet 13;2(7872), 81-4

Age	Gend	er	Br	eed	Analgesi	a Status	Analgesia Adn	ninistered	Time Between Scoring (Before and After)
Mean: 5	Male Neutered	n=7	Pedigree	n=1	Naive	n=17	Buprenorphine 0.001- 0.002mg/kg	n=15	
Years 8 Month	Male	n=1	Domestic Long-Hair	n=2	Analgesia		Methadone 0.2-0.3mg/kg	n=9	Mean: 74 mins
(8 weeks – 19 years)	Female Neutered	n=12	Domestic	n=22	within previous	n=8	Morphine	n-1	
	Female	n=5	Short-Hair	11=22	12 hours		0.2-0.3mg/kg	n=1	

Table 1: Validation Study (Study 1) Demographics (n=25 cats)

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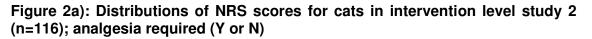
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Cat number	Pre- analgesia	Post- analgesia	Clinically relevant	Change in pain
	CMPS Score	CMPS Score	Y/N	status
1	6	1	Y	
2	13	9	N	
3	3	4	N	
4	3	3	Not recorded	
5	1	1	Y	
6	4	2	N	
7	11	1	Y	
8	8	7	Y	
9	0	0	N	
10	8	4	Y	
11	8	8	Y	
12	12	9	Y	
13	11	8	Y	
14	9	5	M	
15	10	10	Not recorded	
16	8	2	Y	
17	14	3	Y	
18	9	6	Y	
19	0	0		Improved
20	10	2		Improved
21	1	0		Much Improved
22	8	8		Unchanged
23	2	2		Worse
24	0	0		Improved
25	5	0		Improved

<u>Table 2</u>: Study 1 Pre-analgesia and post-analgesia CMPS-F scores and clinical relevance (n= 25)

Age	Gender (status unknown in 3 cats)		Breed		Analgesia Status (Status unknown in 1 cat)		Previous Surgery		
Mean: 6 Years 3 Month (4 months – 18 years)	Male Neutered	n=26	Pedigree Domestic Long- Hair	n=6	Analgesia within previous 12 hours	n=23	YES	n=14	n=9 (sedation score of zero)
								11-14	n=5 (sedation score of 1)
	Male	n=5		n=3			NO	n=9	
	Female Neutered	n=18	Domestic Short- Hair	n=48	Naïve	n=33	YES	n=6	n=4 scored prior to surgery (sedation score of zero) n=2 scored following surgery (sedation score of zero)
	Female	n=5					NO		n=27
<u>Table 3</u> : Inte	ervention Lev	el CMPS-F (	Study 2) Der	nographic	cs (n=57 cats)	C			

Age	Gender (status unknown in 3 cats)		Breed		Analgesia Status		Previous Surgery			
	Male	n=25	Pedigree	n=8	Analgasia		YES	n=27	n=15 (sedation score of zero)	
Mean: 5 Years 5 Month (9weeks – 22 years) (age unknown in 4 cats)	Neutered	11-25	Pedigree	11-0	Analgesia within previous 12 hours	n=36	TES	11-27	n=12 (sedation score of 1)	
	Male	n=2	Domestic Long- Hair	n=9			NO	n=9		
	Female Neutered	n=27	Domestic Short- Hair	n=42	Naive	n=23	YES	n=2	n=1 (sedation score of zero)	
									n=1 (scored 25 hours prior to surgery with no sedation score recorded)	
	Female	n=1					NO		n=20	
<u>Fable 4</u> : Inte	rvention Leve	el rCMPS-F	(Study 2) De	emographi	cs (n=59 cats)		00			



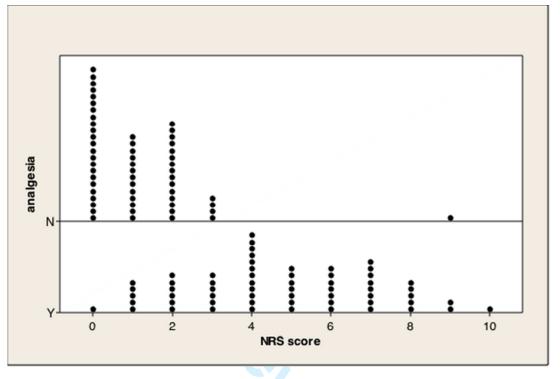
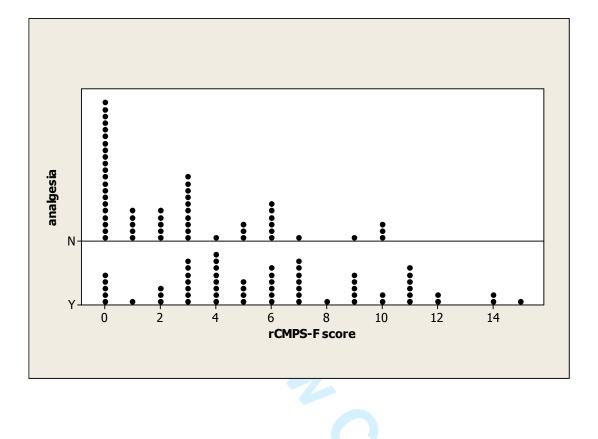
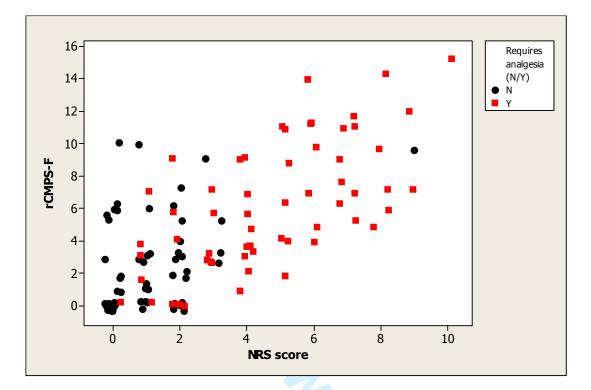


Figure 2b): Distribution of rCMPS-F scores for cats in intervention level study 2 (n=116); analgesia required (Y or N)





**<u>Figure 3</u>**: Scatterplot of rCMPS-F and NRS scores for 116 cats in intervention level study 2